

BRANCHING OUT

Creating Connections to End Sexual Violence

Spring 2014

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Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2014

By Katy Adler



The past 6 months since the last edition of Branching Out have flown by! Sexual Assault Services has gone through a number of transitions in the past year, with a number of changes in staff and changes to our physical space (a new counseling room for the Racine office!). Throughout this transition time, we have appreciated the support of the community, our volunteers, and the survivors with whom we work. It seems that SAS is, in some ways, opening a new chapter, and I am excited to be a part of it.

We are now once again coming up to April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. We are excited to announce that we will be holding our 11th Annual Take Back the Night on Thursday, April 24th. The event will start at the Racine Public Library and will conclude at Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church, where we will have refreshments and our Clothesline Project displayed.

A new addition to Take Back the Night this year will be the Shutter the Silence project. This project, founded by Leanna Vannarom, gives survivors of sexual assault a medium to reclaim power over the words used during their victimization. The project includes photographs of survivors and allies holding the words that perpetrators used to victimize, or statements that others (e.g., family members, friends, law enforcement, therapists, etc.) made that revictimized the individual. Leanna will be one of the speakers at Take Back the Night, and her project will be displayed at Olympia Brown.

I feel fortunate that SAS is able to work alongside community partners and volunteers to provide this awareness event in Racine. Too often, sexual assault survivors are told to stay silent, or are pressured to keep the crime a secret. Sexual Assault Awareness Month motivates us all to break this silence and shed light on the epidemic of sexual assault. It is a time where we can reflect on the ways in which sexual assault affects every one of us, and how pervasive myths and stereotypes surrounding rape are in our society.

Take Back the Night creates an opportunity for survivors and allies to speak out against sexual violence; it is a platform for our voices to be heard when we are so often silenced. Please join us on April 24th and add your voice to those speaking out against sexual violence.

—Katy

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Legislative Update

By Vicki Biehn

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) creates a Legislative Agenda for each legislative year, and this year WCASA worked on increasing the state funding for Sexual Assault Service Providers (SASPs), and passing legislation that will guarantee that victims/survivors will be allowed to have an advocate accompany them as they go through the process of receiving medical care, reporting the sexual assault, and attending court proceedings.

The first issue that WCASA addressed with our state representatives is increasing the state budget allocation for SASPs in the state. The Sexual Assault Victim Services (SAVS) grant program is the sole state allocation of resources to provide sexual assault services in our local communities. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to local SASPs, counties or tribes that offer a number of important services, including: 24/7 crisis response including hospital accompaniment, systems advocacy, including court accompaniment, prevention activities, and fostering community collaborations and partnerships to enhance services for sexual assault victims. As I already reported in our fall community newsletter, when Governor Scott Walker submitted his budget in February of 2013, he requested \$2 million dollars annually for the SAVS grant, which would restore the funding to the 2011 level. Although more funds are needed to provide sexual assault services to all victims in our state, this was an improvement over the bi-annual budget for SAVS. In Governor Walker's budget he also asked that these funds come from general purpose revenue and not from the Crime Victim and Witness Assistance Surcharge. This is quite a significant improvement in how SAVS has been funded as it will create a more consistent and stable funding source for the SAVS grants. I am happy to report that this new budget and new revenue source was approved by the legislature and Governor Scott Walker did sign this bill into law in June of 2013.

Another issue that WCASA is still working on is a bill that would enact victim accompaniment legislation. This bill would allow a survivor to be accompanied by an advocate during various stages of the criminal justice process, including the sexual assault forensic exam, law enforcement interview, and court proceedings, if the victim wishes to have an advocate present. Currently, victims do not have this right and sometimes the victim is not allowed to have an advocate be there with them to provide support. We believe that providing emotional support and information to the victim during the criminal justice process helps to restore some of a victim's sense of control over their life and helps to keep the victim

engaged in the criminal justice process. If the victim stays engaged in the criminal justice process, more offenders will be held accountable for their crimes leading to a safer community. This bill was the second priority of this legislative session for WCASA. At the last publication of our community newsletter a bill had been introduced with bipartisan support, but no hearing had been scheduled. Since then, the Senate subcommittee of Transportation, Public Safety, Veterans and Military Affairs held a public hearing on January 15, 2014. At the hearing there were many survivors, professionals, and other interested individuals that testified in support of the bill. Eventually the bill was passed unanimously out of this subcommittee, but there has been no further action on this bill. Unfortunately, the legislative session is in the final two weeks so this bill will have to wait until next year to go through the legislative process again. WCASA is hopeful that this bill will be passed in the next legislative session which will begin in earnest in January of 2015.

Lastly, WCASA will hold a webinar on August 13, 2014 from 10-11:30am with a complete update and review of the 2013-2014 Wisconsin state legislative sessions. The webinar will be recorded and archived on the WCASA YouTube channel. You can access the webinar at <http://www.youtube.com/user/wcasavpcc>. This writer will also provide an update of the 2013-14 legislative session and upcoming legislative agenda in our fall Branching Out newsletter.

If you would like to be added to the WCASA action alert email list, please contact Vicki Biehn at vbiehn@lsswis.org or Ian Henderson at ianh@wcasa.org. This is an email alert list that sends out information occasionally about upcoming legislative issues requesting that you contact your state or federal representative and ask them to either support or not support an upcoming bill. Please use this link to find out who your representative is: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/Pages/waml/asp>.

--vicki

SAS Wish List

- Volunteer Advocates!
- Gift cards/certificates from Target, Office Depot, grocery stores or other discount stores
- Courage to Heal book series
- New clothes for victims to wear when they leave the hospital (t-shirts, sweat pants, underwear, etc.)
- Body lotions & shower gels to be given to victims seen at the hospital
- General art and craft supplies for the children in our counseling program
- Bus tokens so that clients can access our services
- Forever stamps (the kind that do not expire as the rates change)
- Monetary donations are always needed and appreciated



Rompiendo la Barrera

Breaking the Barrier

By Annabell Bustillos

Sexual Assault Services (SAS) is in need of Bilingual-Spanish Speaking Volunteers. At SAS, we strive to provide culturally competent services to the people we serve. My job includes providing help to our Spanish speaking victims and their support people. In order for me to do this, I need help from other bilingual individuals. The more Spanish speaking volunteers we have, the richer the cultural diversity we can create.

Racine has a large Hispanic/Latino population. According to the 2010 United States Census, the Hispanic population is the largest growing population in Racine County. With an increase from 14,990 in 2000 to 22,546 in 2010, that is an increase of 50.4%. This population is a combination of a number of subcultures that can come from over two dozen countries of origin. Due to this large group of subcultures, there are a large number of Spanish dialects. My goal is to achieve a greater number of Spanish speaking volunteers to help not only bridge language and cultural obstacles, but to better serve this population and also to respond to the hospital when a Spanish speaking sexual assault victim or support person seeks medical help. To achieve this goal, we need to train volunteers to become Advocates.

An advocate's compassion and support play an important role in a victim's hospital visit, even if the advocate does not speak Spanish. Hospitals are required to provide interpreters, but they are not advocates. Interpreters are trained to interpret exact words and may not be able to build the rapport that a trained advocate builds with a victim. They are also not trained to be sensitive to the unique experiences of a sexual assault victim. An advocate gets special training on the specific needs of a sexual assault victim. Interpreters are a wonderful resource and should definitely be used, but when a person has just gone through a traumatic and confusing experience, having someone who understands them directly can be very comforting. This is why having bilingual volunteers is very important and a needed resource.

If you or anyone you know is interested in volunteering, regardless if they are bilingual or monolingual please contact Carla Pratt at 262-619-1634 ext. 18.

To find out more about our bilingual services please contact Annabell Bustillos at 262-619-1634 ext. 14 or via email at annabell.bustillos@lsswis.org.

—Annabell

11th Annual TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

Take a stand against sexual violence!
Support those who have been sexually assaulted!

Join Us To End Sexual Violence

Thursday, April 24th 2014

5:00-7:30 pm

♦ Starts at: Racine Public Library
75 Seventh Street Racine WI 53403

♦ Awareness March

♦ Ends at: Olympia Brown Unitarian
Universalist Church

625 College Avenue Racine WI 53403

Featuring Shutter the Silence

Shutter the Silence is a photography project intended to capture the untold stories of survivors and allies of sexual assault. Shutter the Silence was launched on August 5, 2012 by photographer and survivor, Leanna Vannarom. She hopes to make a difference by beginning to wipe away the shame and silence our society has cast upon sexual violence. Shutter the Silence is a way for survivors to come forward and find strength and healing through art. In doing so, it helps spread awareness and uncover the hidden truths of sexual assault.

For more information, or if you are interested in participating, contact Leanna at lvannaromphotography@gmail.com.

Brought to you by
SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES

In partnership with
The Racine Public Library &
Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist
Church



A Closer Look

By Carla Pratt

Misunderstandings surrounding Intimate Partner Sexual Violence

Sexual Assault is generally defined as any unwanted sexual contact without consent. How is it then, that in our society, many still believe that sexual assault is not possible between a married or otherwise committed couple who has previously had consensual sexual interactions? In a national telephone survey, only 15% of those surveyed believed that spouses or dating partners could rape their partner. 50% of college men surveyed believed that it was impossible to be raped by a partner in marriage. I believe this to be one of the most long lasting and accepted rape myths. From where does this belief that once consent is given, it can never be withheld come? How far have we come in realizing that sexual contact without consent, whether in a committed relationship or not, constitutes sexual assault? What are the consequences of this pervading myth?

As far back as 1736, Sir Matthew Hale stated regarding common law, "the husband cannot be guilty of rape committed by himself upon his lawful wife, for by their mutual matrimonial consent and contract the wife has given up herself in this kind unto her husband, which she cannot retract" (1736, as cited in Martin et al. 2007, p.331). The United States formally recognized this doctrine in a court trial in 1857 and again in 1905 when the court decided that the "law would not permit a woman to retract her consent to marital relations after once assuming them" (Barshis 1983, p. 384). As our society has become more open about sex outside of marriage, the myth that consent once given in a marriage relationship has grown to include dating relationships which have a history of consensual sex.

Not until 1975 was there any state in the US that considered marital rape possible, let alone illegal. Further, it wasn't until 1993 when all 50 states had laws making marital rape illegal. It seems then, that we have at the least conquered the legal field in dismantling this myth, right? Unfortunately, no; 30 of the 50 states currently have exemptions to their laws concerning marital rape. These exceptions include that: marital rape is prosecutable only if the spouses are living apart, legally separated, or divorced, if physical force is used, or if the wife cannot consent due to mental impairment or incapacitation (National Center for the Prosecution of Violence Against Women, 2009). This belief filters down to relationships

outside of marriage in that once consent is given for sex in a relationship, rape is not possible. Can you imagine if we held this belief about consent in other matters? Once you loan a friend a car, you can never recant that consent? Once you consent to taking someone's kids for the weekend, you must welcome them for another weekend at any time? And be very careful, because once you consent to going camping on Labor Day Weekend with your partner or date, you have committed to that activity for your life or as long as your partner so desires!

Research has shown that rape within intimate relationships is common. In a study by Finkelhor & Yllo published in 1985, researchers estimated that 10 to 14% of married women had experienced a rape within marriage. In a 1995 study by Randall and Haskell involving Canadian women, they found that 30% of women who were sexually assaulted as adults were assaulted by their intimate partners. Add to this the fact that those who experience sexual assault by an intimate partner usually experience multiple incidents of rape by that partner and it is easy to see why intimate partner rape is a genuine public health problem.

The consequences of intimate partner rape are multiple and complicated. The physical consequences can range from injuries to the genital area to contraction of Sexually Transmitted Infections. The psychological consequences of being raped by someone you have loved and trusted are many, and can include anxiety, shock, depression, problems eating or sleeping, problems with self-image and difficulties with trusting others.

The majority of our society, including professionals who come in contact with victims of sexual violence, tend to think of sexual assaults in terms of unwanted sexual contact outside of a committed relationship. The reality is that many sexual assaults happen inside of a committed relationship by trusted partners with whom the victim has a history of consensual sexual contact. In order for our society to begin to change the reality and prevalence of sexual violence in our midst, we must change the myths surrounding all types of sexual assault. Sexual violence perpetrated by intimate partners is only one area in which myths exist, but it is one in which there are few spotlights shown. As a result, this myth is widespread and difficult to break. We, as advocates and health care workers who work with sexual assault survivors, need to understand intimate partner sexual violence and its consequences so that we can be a part of shining the spotlight on the truth about sexual assault between intimate and married partners.

—Carla

Adapted from Marital Rape: New research and Directions by Raquel Kennedy Bergen as published in Issue 30 of the WACASA newsletter.



Family Advocate

By Samantha Sustachek

When I meet with parents and caregivers of adolescents at the Racine County Child Advocacy Center (CAC), I offer a different set of resources and take home handouts than I do to caregivers of smaller children. Teens and parents of teens have some extra safety issues to consider when attempting to keep this population safe from sexual abuse. Technology and its use by teens can be a major risk. It seems that every teen has a cell phone and a social media account of some kind. This technology is a major part of teenage culture, and teens often think only of the benefits and not the dangers technology can bring.

In a handout entitled “Staying Safe While Staying Connected,” the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN.org) offers safety tips for teens and outlines several reasons why sending sexual photos, messages or videos (sexting) is not a good idea. The NCTSN warns teens that once a message is sent, it cannot be taken back, and the sender loses control over where it ultimately ends up. A “sext” will often be forwarded to someone for whom it was not originally intended, and a private message can easily be made very public. When a sexual message gets out, it can make life very difficult for the subject of that message – relationships can be ruined, job opportunities and scholarships can be lost, and people can even be kicked out of school. The bottom line is that sexting can be illegal for teens. If the subject of a photo or video is under 18, the sext becomes child pornography, and possessing it or distributing it could result in a felony charge.

So how does a teenager keep him/herself safe in the face of the hidden and not so hidden dangers of technology when using that technology is practically unavoidable? The NCTSN suggests carefully protecting your identity by picking a strong password (nothing obvious that others could easily guess) and keeping that password private. It is also important not to post too many personal details on social networking sites like Facebook and be sure to use the strongest security settings available. Potential predators are great at gathering information about possible targets on social networking sites, and often teens inadvertently provide information like the name of their school or post pictures of themselves near recognizable landmarks that allow predators to locate them. Teens also need to be sure they know who they are “talking” to online and should never give out personal information to someone they do not know. And of course, teens should never meet up in person with someone they only know through the internet.

Used wisely, technology can be very beneficial and can even help people to be safer in the face of difficult situations. In 2011, an app for smart phones called Circle of 6 (circleof6app.com) won the White House Apps Against Abuse Technology Challenge. This free app allows users to select six friends to be in their circle, and with a few taps of their phone, can alert their friends if they need help. Perhaps they are out for the evening and become separated from their friends. The app can use their phone’s GPS locator to send a text message to their friends to come pick them up at their current location. Maybe the user is on a date with someone new, things are not going well, and they are feeling uncomfortable in the situation. Again, with a few taps on the phone, a text can be sent to someone in their circle asking that friend to give a “rescue call,” providing an interruption and escape from a potentially dangerous date. And in a true emergency situation, the app has a hotline function as well. Within the app, icons represent different actions, so no one but the user can tell what they are doing. Circle of 6 aims to prevent violence before it occurs. It can be used by anyone, although it was designed for college students and is currently being customized for a variety of college campuses.

In our digital age, new technology is constantly being developed and is difficult to avoid. Unfortunately, as quickly as the technology is introduced, it seems predators find ways to use it to their advantage. And although technology can be dangerous for teens when used recklessly or improperly, with proper caution and education it can certainly be made safer and can even be used in the fight against sexual violence.

—Sam



SAS Program Statistics July-December 2013

Crisis Line Calls.....	97
Racine Hospital Visits.....	36
Burlington Hospital Visits.....	4
Legal Advocacy Sessions.....	6
New Counseling Clients.....	31
Counseling Sessions.....	373
Support Group Sessions.....	18
Community Presentations.....	19
CAC Appointments.....	85



Sexual Assault Services
1220 Mound Ave., Suite 304
Racine, WI 53404

Contact Us!

SAS Racine Office
1220 Mound Ave. Suite 304
Racine, WI 53404
262-619-1634

SAS Burlington Office
480 S. Pine St.
Burlington, WI 53105
262-763-6226 Ext. 109

24 Hour Crisis Line: 262-637-SAFE (7233)

Website: <http://www.sasoflss.org>

Stay Connected!



Join our News and Events email update list! Would you like to receive information on upcoming SAS events and volunteer opportunities? Email Samantha Sustachek at ssustachek@lsswis.org with "SAS news and events" in the subject line and she will include you in all SAS news and events related emails.

Sexual Assault Services seeks to create a safe and compassionate environment to help promote the healing of sexual assault survivors and their support people.

Sexual Assault Services is funded by United Way of Racine County, Victims of Crime Act grant, Sexual Assault Victim Services grant, Violence Against Women Act grant and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault.